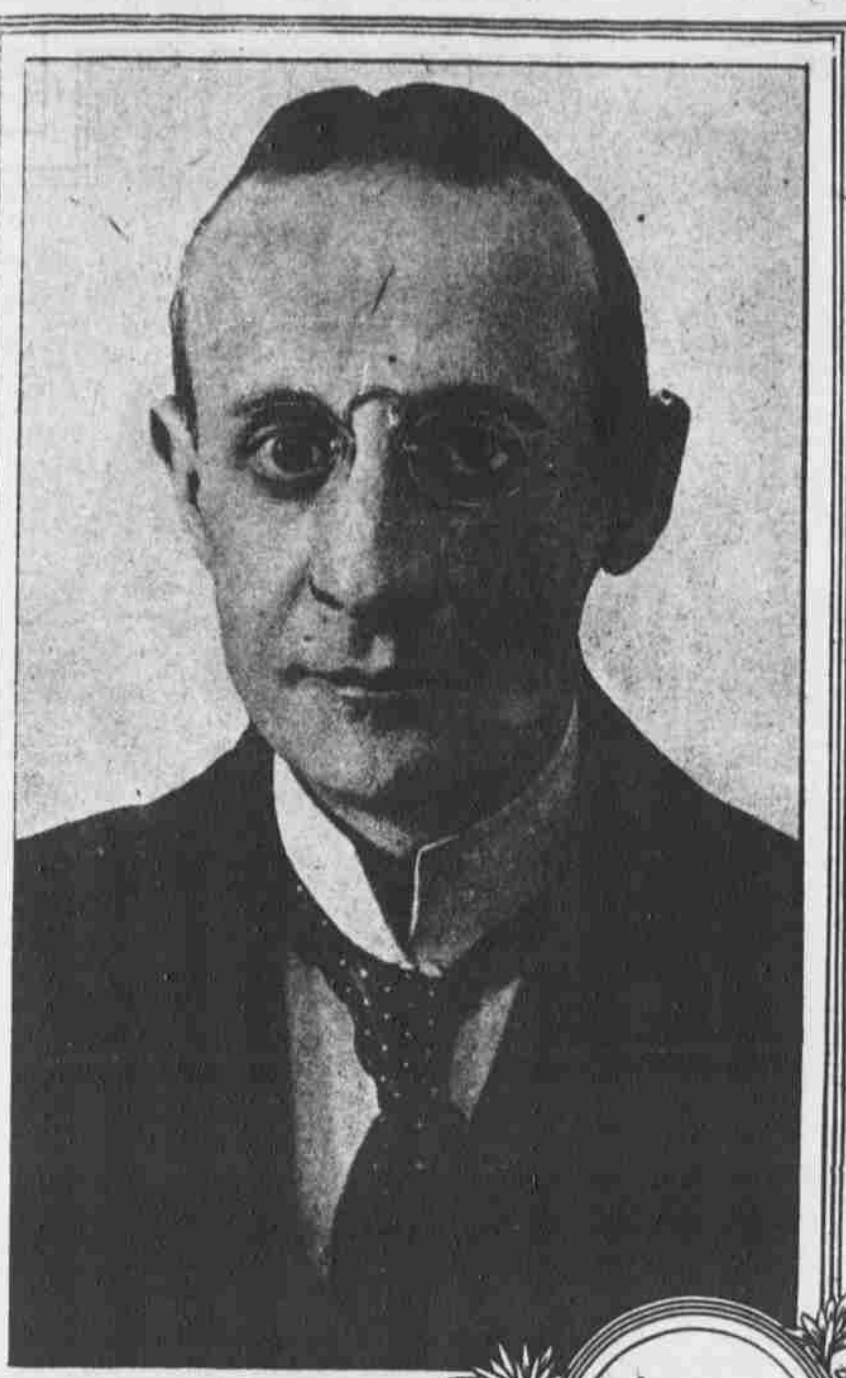


Drs. Flexner and Copeland Urge World Fight to End Influenza

Eminent Head of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research Suggests Scientific Hunt for Source and New York City Health Commissioner Emphasizes Need for Immediate Action, Regardless of Cost, Seeking to Arouse Both Society and the Government



DR
SIMON
FLEXNER



DR. R. S. COPELAND

To be forewarned is not always to be prepared, in contradiction of the ancient adage. Health boards and individual physicians certainly knew from last season that there would be a recurrence of the dread influenza, which in that year took so fatal a toll. But deep as had been the study into the causes and cure, once more this country has passed through the horrors of an epidemic.

Dr. Simon Flexner, head of the Rockefeller Institute, the purpose of which is investigation into the physical ills of mankind, makes the statement that the world must make a mighty scientific effort if it hopes to rid itself of this great scourge.

The celebrated scientist has a concrete, progressive suggestion to advance. It is that a search must be made for the source of the contagion to be followed by a great cooperative effort among all mankind to strike a blow at the heart of the disease monster.

"Regarding epidemic disease in general," Dr. Flexner says, "we are wont to assume the introduction from without and usually from a distant locality of a special kind or race of micro-organism which is held directly responsible for the ensuing epidemic."

"In the instance of the epidemic of pneumonia no such importation or new introduction of the inciting streptococcus needs to be, or actually is, assumed. It is so probable as to amount to practical certainty that the excessively virulent streptococcus hemolyticus was developed by a process of selection, through successive transfer from person to person and by gradual enlargement of its invasive properties."

"We are on safe ground when we assume that it leaves the respiratory organs of one person to be introduced on the corresponding organs of other persons and in no other manner."

Emphasizes the Warnings.

That statement from this eminent man emphasizes every warning of the health authorities against contact of the uninfected with a sufferer, and implies a warning which cannot be too generally understood by all. He considers influenza separately from pneumonia, admitting that wide differences of opinion prevail with regard to the manner of its spread and the nature of its micro-organism, saying:

"While other epidemics proceed from had to worse, influenza seems to overwhelm communities over even wide stretches of country as by a single, stupendous blow. While in pneumonia the gradually accelerated rate of extension may be taken to indicate personal conveyance, in the case of influenza the sudden wide onset appears the very negation of such a process."

"Hence the revival of the notion of mysterious influences to account for the phenomenon. This is very far from being a matter of remote importance only, since in the end the successful imposition of sanitary regulations involves wide cooperation, and until the majority of individuals composing a community is brought to a fair level of understanding of and belief in the measures proposed, serious and sustained endeavor to enforce them is scarcely to be expected."

"No better instance of a communicable disease could perhaps be invoked to exorcise the false idea of the mysterious origin of epidemics. To dwell solely on the sudden and overwhelming stroke of the disease is wholly to overlook the significant incidents that precede the infection because they lack dramatic quality. Detailed records show convincingly a period of invasion during which there is a gradual rise in the number of cases to culminate in a wide-spread, so-called 'explosive' outbreak."

"It happens that the early cases of epi-

demia tend not to be severe, chiefly because they rarely are attended by pneumonia and hence are frequently mistaken, and the confusion of diagnosis is resolved only when the full intensity of the epidemic is realized. In the meantime rich opportunity has existed for the commingling of the sick and the well, of doubtless healthy carriers of the inciting agent and others, until so high a degree of dissemination has been secured as to expose the entire susceptible element of the population. "Like deductions can be drawn from the geographic movements of influenza epi-

demics. In eastern Russia and Turkestan, influenza spreads with the speed of a caravan, in Europe and America with the speed of an express train, and in the world at large with the rapidity of an ocean liner."

"There are good reasons for believing that influenza itself is not a serious disease but that its sinister character is given to it by the remarkable frequency with which it is followed, under particular circumstances, by a concomitant or secondary pneumonia infection, to which the severe effects and high mortality are traceable and which is the product of in-

vasion of the respiratory organs with bacteria commonly present on the upper respiratory mucous membranes."

"The severe effects and high fatalities arise, not from bacteria brought or imposed from without, but from their representatives which are commonly resident in the membranes of the nose and throat in health."

"Protection in diseases of this class is not to be secured by applying sanitary measures on a wide scale to an extraneous and inanimate source of the infectious micro-organisms, as to contaminated water supplies, which spread typhoid, or to inferior animal species, such as the mosquito or the rat, which act as intermediaries to conveying the germs of yellow fever, but by methods of personal hygiene, applied on the individual scale of safeguarding one person from another, the most difficult of all hygienic regulations to enforce."

"Epidemic diseases, in the commonly accepted sense, have fixed homes. In those they survive without usually attracting special attention. But from time to time and for reasons not clear those dominant foci of the epidemics take on unwonted activity evidenced by the more frequent appearance of the particular disease among the native population, and sooner or later an extension of the disease beyond the endemic confines."

Source of Influenza Known.

"There are excellent reasons for believing the endemic home of influenza to be Eastern Europe, and in particular the border region between Russia and Turkestan. From this Eastern home at intervals, usually of two or three decades, a migratory epidemic influenza begins moving eastward and westward, with the greater velocity in the latter direction—ours."

"Accordingly, it seems worth while to consider an effort to control amounting even to eventual eradication of the diseases in the region of their endemic survival, an effort not occasional and intensively spasmodic but continuous over rela-

tively long periods, in the hope that the seed beds, as it were, of the disease shall be destroyed."

"That, it will be remembered with pride by every American, was exactly what was done with regard to yellow fever, a problem very different, of course, but one of which the successful solution certainly gives hope that much might be done if this suggestion of Dr. Flexner should be carried out."

"The very magnitude of the problems of poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) and influenza," Dr. Flexner continued, "invites to an imaginative outlook, which, while perhaps non-realizable to-day, may not be hopelessly out of reach to-morrow."

"In proposing to strive for this high achievement, not merely of parrying the blows struck by destructive epidemics but of rendering them impossible to strike in the future, we may pause for a moment to reflect on the different ways in which people react to great calamities, such as those brought by war and by disease."

"As the result of a cruel and devastating war, revolutions in governments supposed the most stable may occur, but no such result follows after still more devastating epidemics."

"The last epidemic of influenza claimed possibly more victims than the great war, and the losses to the world in emotion spent, treasure consumed and progress impeded are incalculable; yet through a fortuitous circumstance of psychology, from the one calamity the world may emerge chastened, perhaps even bettered, while from the other, because of a depth of ignorance amounting often even to fatalism, mankind may largely miss the deep meaning of the lesson."

Dr. Copeland's Ideas.

The head of the Health Board of New York feels that both governments and society have been criminally negligent with regard to "flu." He referred to the influenza pandemic of 1918 as having been

the most serious invasion of the public health in history.

"It is probable," said Dr. Copeland, "that the germ responsible for influenza is a very low form of vegetable life. To my mind it is lamentable that appropriating bodies did not anticipate the present situation, and, by providing money, have the laboratories and the scientists ready and at work pushing out the boundaries of human knowledge so that some form of prevention or cure might have been found before this certainty eventuated."

"It is not too late today to go forward in this undertaking."

"I am glad to see that the national Congress is considering the appropriation of \$500,000 for the study of influenza, but I can see no reason why, instead, \$5,000,000 should not be appropriated."

"If the laboratories of the Department of Health of the city of New York were given \$500,000 for the study of this disease, in my opinion it would be money well expended. The Rockefeller Institute, the Armour Institute of Chicago, as well as the great research laboratories in Paris and in London, should be at similar work."

"A disease like typhoid fever has been so thoroughly studied, the habits of the germ are so well understood, that any community or locality is prepared to deal at once with an invasion of the public health by this particular plague. About influenza, on the contrary, remain many mysteries."

"We don't know whether it is due to a germ or to a virus or what its cause may be. The result is that when an influenza epidemic comes every physician in the world helplessly throws up his hands, admitting instantly that he knows nothing of the cause and therefore can know nothing of prevention."

"Notwithstanding the limited funds at the command of the Commissioner of Health the laboratories of New York city of the Health Department have been directed to put aside everything else in order that two diseases—influenza and measles—may be studied. That, we believe, is the method of true constructivism. If the world followed it for one short year we never again would suffer from an epidemic of influenza."

Must Find the Cause.

"Whenever science has found the cause of a disease very little time has preceded the discovery of some means of prevention or of cure. Every energy of every scientist of every laboratory in every country in the world ought to be turned now to the study of this particular disease, in order that this may occur."

"Simply because influenza after coming in 1889 and 1890 disappeared from the annals of our history for quite a time society and the medical profession forgot how terrible it was while it was here. This present epidemic will die out, and unless society is aroused to the importance of protecting the next and succeeding generation little progress will be made."

"This is the time, while the germ is not temporarily buried, but while the effects of its activity above the surface are widespread, for scientific men to busy themselves in studying the problem."

"Our people were high in their resistance of the influenza as they would be high in their resistance of any other disease. But in spite of all our efforts at public education in health matters, in spite of all the money which we spent in efforts to control the disease, in spite of everything that we could do, 35,000 men, women and children died in this city as the result of this disease and its complications."

"More people died from influenza during the epidemic which preceded that now under way than were killed in the Great War."

"And many more are dying and will die. "Is it not time, therefore, for every nation, as for a concert of all nations, to take hold upon this thing in an energetic way which will insure solution of the problem and insure giving to society:

"(1) Knowledge of what causes the disease"

"(2) Some effective prevention for the disease, and,

"(3) Some means of cure when once the human body has been attacked by this particular form of ailment?"

"Plainly the doctors are agreed on this question that the source of the flu must be sought and found. Plainly Dr. Flexner's thought is that humanity may do away with influenza if it wishes to."

Does it wish to?

Who will provide the money for the great stroke at the source of the world scourge? Will it be a government or a group of governments? Or will it be an individual or group of individuals. Or will it be no one at all—leaving the world exposed to newly terrible influenza tragedies?

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Paying the War Department's Bills

TO THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD:

MY attention has been called to an article published in THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD on page 22, head of the third column, of your issue of February 3, entitled "System Urged in Buying for Army." The article in question states that in order "that the army may profit from its experience in the world war and to bring about a centralization of responsibility in the matter of supply, a large committee of ex-officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces and the United States is being formed in New York to urge on Congress proper legislation for a unified supply system that will admit of sound business organization." Included in the article is a list of the officers of this new organization is given and the following is quoted from a statement issued by their Executive Committee:

"In our judgment all army supplies should be purchased, paid for, stored and transported through one staff department, in which responsibility for the supply of the Army should be centralized."

This organization is composed almost exclusively, if not entirely, of former Quartermaster Corps officers who served in the Quartermaster Corps of this country and overseas, and the purpose of the organization as shown in their statement is to consolidate in the Quartermaster Corps all activities that have to do with the procurement of supply, the contracting therefor and the payment and accounting connected therewith.

At the beginning of the world war the Quartermaster Corps had the procurement of the greater portion of the supplies for the Army, the transportation and storage of same, and the paying and accounting therefor. Under the stress of war conditions it was found necessary, in order to properly carry on the work of supply for the Army, to organize the Transportation Service as an independent activity and place the construction activities also under an independent head, it being very evident as a result of actual operations in time of war that too many duties had been placed upon one War Department organization.

Prior to the declaration of war there were five supply bureaus in the War Department, each making its own purchases, making its own contracts, paying its own bills and doing its own accounting, and there were as many systems of doing business as there were bureaus. As a result of this disjointed method of doing business, bureaus of the War Department were found bidding against each other in the market

Finance Service, Forced by Need, Saves Money and Expedites Business, Writes Brig.-Gen. H. M. Lord

for a class of supplies that were restricted in quantity. Under the Overman act this was remedied and there was assigned to the Quartermaster Corps, under the title of "Purchase and Storage Division," the duty of purchasing all classes of supplies that were common in use to two or more bureaus of the War Department, leaving to the other bureaus the purchase of such technical or special supplies as were peculiar to their own operation.

Under One Directing Head.

Under the Overman act the finances of the War Department were consolidated under one directing head, styled the "Director of Finance," and for the first time in the history of the War Department it was possible to have a financial control. The Finance Service of the War Department as organized pays all bills, whether for supplies or services, and does the accounting therefor. Systems of procedure have been simplified and multiplicity of forms have been standardized, a trained personnel has been put into the field and bills are being paid more promptly and more accurately than ever before in the history of the Government, and the Government has been given protection by an independent audit of accounts submitted for settlement by an impersonal service which is not under control of the supply bureaus which have created the obligation.

A supply representative who has entered into a contract and has obligated the Government is no longer able to command a disbursing officer, who heretofore has been part of the personnel of his office, to pay the bill irrespective of whether or not it is a proper charge against the Government, and the protection afforded the Government by this independence of the disbursing agency is not confined alone to any intentional attempt to defraud the Government, but is of great value as a saving factor in the case of honest blunders made by contracting officers. Since July 1, 1919, the Finance Service, because of its entire independence from supply bureaus, has been able to save to the Government from one field of activity alone sufficient money to pay for the entire operation of the Finance Service—it is commissioned, enlisted and civilian personnel—for a number of years. This is not a general statement, but is a matter of absolute record, supported by figures showing actual collections made.

The Military Affairs Committee of the

Senate and the Military Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives, after extended hearings, have decided in favor of an independent finance service for the army, independent of any and all supply bureaus. This decision has been reached because it has been conclusively shown to the members of the two committees that such an independence of finance is absolutely necessary for an economical and efficient administration of the War Department finances.

When the various finance activities of the War Department bureaus were taken over by the finance service there were six disbursing offices in New York city, requiring six rentals, independent overhead in the way of offices and civilians, and it was necessary for creditors of the Government to find the particular office which carried the appropriations from which the contractor's bill could be paid. All these independent offices, with their leases and their expensive personnel, have been eliminated, and contractors having bills against the War Department submit them to one disbursing officer in one office, who has funds with which to pay all legitimate bills against the War Department. At the time of the consolidation of the New York offices there were taken over by the finance service more than twenty thousand unpaid bills, all of them long past due. These outstanding bills were immediately settled, and that has been characteristic of the operation of the finance service with relation to the War Department's indebtedness the country over.

Pays Bills More Rapidly.

There have been charges of delay in payment, some of which might legitimately be charged to the finance service, but the great mass of bills have been paid more promptly and more accurately than at any other time in the history of the Government. Finance officers representing the finance service have as their particular and definite duty the settling of accounts, which heretofore was a side issue in the office of the various supply bureaus. The finance service is not only not responsible itself for delays, except in very infrequent cases, but is responsible and entitled to the credit for expediting payments in spite of delays on the part of the supply bureaus.

If a voucher is submitted to the finance office for settlement and it is not complete

a representative of the director of finance immediately gets in touch with the parties at fault and omits no effort possible to have the voucher properly completed and immediately paid. The greater efficiency of the finance service over prior conditions where the supply bureaus controlled payment was so marked that the Merchants Association of New York, in whose six thousand firm members are numbered many hundreds of War Department contractors, has given unqualified indorsement of an independent finance service in the War Department.

Valuable Aid From Experts.

In the organization of the finance service the director of finance has had the valued assistance of an advisory council made up of the following persons:

Otto H. Kahn of Kahn, Loeb & Co., New York city; Charles G. Dubois, comptroller of the American Red Cross, and comptroller of the American Telegraph and Telephone Company; Charles D. Norton, formerly Assistant Secretary of the Treasury and now president First Securities Company, New York city; C. B. Seger, formerly president of the Union Pacific and now president of the United States Rubber Company; Gerard Swope of the Western Electric Company, and Col. S. H. Wolfe of the firm of S. H. & Lee J. Wolfe, New York city.

This committee, which has been in touch with and is intimately familiar with the institution, development and growth of the finance service, has written to the chairman of the Military Affairs Committee of the Congress urging the retention of the finance service.

The Inspector General of the Army, whose duty it has been to inspect money accounts of all disbursing officers of the War Department, indorses an independent finance service as being economical and necessary for the efficient administration of the War Department finances.

The plan to consolidate under the Quartermaster General the finances of the Army, which is proposed by the organization referred to in your article of February 3, does not meet with favor on the part of Army personnel who are in any way familiar with Army conditions and the conditions that have been presented during the war relative to supplies and finance. Gen. Pershing, in his hearings before the Joint Military Affairs Committee, stated that he would be opposed to having the Finance Service attached to the Quartermaster Bureau, stating that the Quartermaster Corps was inclined to be top-heavy anyway.

Gen. Charles G. Dawes, president of the

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